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Cheese for Civilians

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Broadcast by Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, Arthur C. Bartlett, Special Assistant to the Director, Food Distribution Administration, and Wallace Kaddeverly, Radio Service, in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, February 16, 1943, over stations associated with the Blue Network.

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WALLACE KADDERLY: Back with us again today are Ruth Van Deman and Arthur Bartlett to give us a round-up on another dairy product. Last week it was butter. Today it's cheese. And again Mr. Bartlett, representing the Food Distribution Administration, will fill in the supply picture and Miss Van Deman will handle the eating side, from the Bureau of Home Economics angle.

ARTHUR BARTLETT: Wallace, I hope that doesn't mean you have to be a home economist to eat cheese.

KADDERLY: How about it, Ruth?

RUTH VAN DEMAN: Hardly. But there's cheese eating and cheese eating, you know. Some eat cheese for its cheese flavor. Some eat cheese for its rich, mellow texture. Some eat cheese because they know it's a fine concentrated food--with many important food values packed into small compass.

BARTLETT: How about eating cheese just because you like it?

VAN DEMAN: Fine. But along with the liking, the home economists would like to see full appreciation of the food value. We can't take our cheese for granted these days--not with the pressure there is on all kinds of protein foods.

BARTLETT: You're right. Cheese is another of the foods we haven't enough of. And our cheese supply must be shared three ways. Some must go to our military forces--Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard--all our forces on land and sea, and in the air. Some must go to our Allies--to help them fight the Axis. Some must stay at home and go to our American Island Territories to alternate with meat, poultry, eggs, fish, and other protein foods.

KADDERLY: I take it we're talking here about the same kind of cheese--American Cheddar....the main cheese in United States production.

BARTLETT: Right. American Cheddar--the kind named for Cheddar, England. You remember, a long time ago an English farmer living near the Cheddar caves worked out a method of manufacture that's become the basis for our largest cheese making industry in this country....This year, 1943, we hope to produce around eight and a quarter million pounds of American Cheddar cheese.

KADDERLY: But a good slice of that is already ear-marked for Government purchase, under the recent order from the Secretary of Agriculture, is it not?

BARTLETT: It is, Wallace. Under that order every producer of Cheddar Cheese making more than 8,000 pounds a month must set aside 50 percent of his output for sale to the Government. This "set-aside" plan started in operation yesterday February 15.

VAN DEMAN: I suppose that's to keep us civilians from getting more than our share. Our cheese eating habits have been on the up-and-up the last few years.

BARTLETT: True. The per capita consumption of all cheese last year (1942), except for cottage cheese, pot cheese, and baker's cheese, was nearly 6 and a half pounds. That is higher than it has ever been.

VAN DEMAN: And what's it likely to be this year?

BARTLETT: Between 4 1/2 and 5 pounds. That's assuming the cheese makers come up to their production goals...and this set-aside order on Cheddar cheese works out the way we hope it will.

VAN DEMAN: Well, I see two things we can do. We can widen our cheese-eating tastes....get better acquainted with other kinds of cheese besides Cheddar. There's Swiss, brick, blue mold, and many other kinds, besides cottage cheese. They're not counted into this 4 to 5 pound estimate.

BARTLETT: That's right. Spreading our cheese eating over more kinds would help some. The greatest squeeze is on Cheddar, because it's the best kind for overseas shipment.

VAN DEMAN: And second, we can make the fullest possible use of every ounce of cheese that comes into our possession. Cheese is no longer a tasty tid-bit, something to be added to an already complete meal. I don't want to bear down too hard on this point. But cheese is highly important for its protein and its calcium, not to mention several other food values.

KADDERLY: Ruth, that seems to me to be getting right down to the nub of the matter. Whatever kind of cheese it is, it's milk in concentrated form. If I remember right, it takes around five quarts of milk to make a pound of Cheddar cheese. The ratio would be about the same for any other kind of hard cheese....And even by pushing our milk production as high as we can this year, we can't hope to get enough milk to fill all our needs for dairy products. So we've got to make the utmost of what we have.

BARTLETT: Well Ruth, have you some suggestions on how we can "stretch" our cheese....not exactly cheese-paring ways, but....

VAN DEMAN: But shaving right down to the rind. I understand....Well, cheese is a perfect mixer with bread and cereal of any kind--rice, cornmeal, hominy grits, macaroni, and all the wheat products. Cheese has several of the things they lack. Protein and calcium especially, as we already said. And where the cereals are mild in flavor, cheese has nip and tang. Also, properly handled cheese melts easily, so that rich, appetizing flavor spreads all through a dish of macaroni and cheese, say, or a cheese fondue whipped up from bread crumbs, milk, and eggs.

BARTLETT: You say cheese properly handled melts easily. What's the proper handling?

VAN DEMAN: Getting the cheese divided up in small pieces--sliced, grated, what you will--before you heat it. Then going easy on the heat. If you heat cheese too rapidly or too long you make it tough and stringy.

BARTLETT: I wonder if that's why my Welsh rabbit doesn't come out just right sometimes?

KADDERLY: Better get a Bureau of Home Economics recipe, Arthur. Surely you have an anti-curdling Welsh rabbit recipe, haven't you, Ruth?

VAN DEMAN: Yes. It's a wartime recipe, too, with the quantity of cheese scaled down and a sauce of fat and flour and milk to act as a stabilizer. Cheese isn't nearly so likely to get overcooked when it's blended into a sauce....Yes, Wallace, I brought along this new folder, "Cheese in Your Meals," in case you'd like to offer it to our Farm and Home friends.

KADDERLY: I'll do that in just a minute. There's just one point, Arthur, about cheese supplies I'd like to straighten out first. There was a time last summer when we thought we had very large stocks of cheese, wasn't there? I remember we were asked to be very liberal in our use of cheese.

BARTLETT: Yes, we did have large stocks of cheese. So large, in fact, that some producers began to be afraid it was too much. Some of them even shut down their plants. But we knew that we were going to need all we could produce, and more. So we urged everybody to buy and eat cheese to keep production up-- to encourage the plants to keep right on producing. And now we're mighty glad we did.

KADDERLY: And there we'll let this cheese discussion stand for today. And thank you, Ruth Van Deman, and you, Arthur Bartlett.

And now, Farm and Home friends, this leaflet, "Cheese in your meals", with many delicious reading cheese recipes. If you want a copy, send your name and address on a post card to the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Or brief it to "Cheese Leaflet" -- and address the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

